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Special Services for Children

April 1977



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-77567

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April 1977




Policy Statements by

The Honourable Margaret Birch
Provincial Secretariat
For Social Development



Ontario

The Honourable Keith Norton
Ministry of
Community and
Social Services



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STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE MARGARET BIRCH,
PROVINCIAL SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT TO
THE ONTARIO LEGISLATURE ON THE INTEGRATION OF
CHILDREN'S SERVICES, APRIL, 1977

MR. SPEAKER:

I WOULD LIKE TO EXPLAIN SOME OF THE BACKGROUND
AND PROVIDE FURTHER DETAILS CONCERNING THE INITIATIVES
AFFECTING CHILDREN'S SERVICES WHICH WERE ANNOUNCED
TUESDAY IN THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE.

IT HAS OFTEN BEEN SAID BEFORE, BUT IT BEARS
REPEATING, THAT CHILDREN MOST NEED TO BE ABLE TO GROW
UP IN A NORMAL FASHION, NURTURED BY FAMILY AND COMMUNITY.
WHERE PROBLEMS ARISE, HELP NEEDS TO BE AVAILABLE IN WAYS THAT
WILL REINFORCE THE FAMILY UNIT AND RELY ON COMMUNITY RESOURCES.

MR. SPEAKER, FOR MANY YEARS THIS GOVERNMENT HAS
BEEN COMMITTED TO HELPING CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES AND
COMMUNITIES. AS A RESULT PROGRAMS HAVE ARISEN AND EVOLVED
IN A VARIETY OF WAYS.

OUR EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE RANGE AND VARIETY OF
SERVICES HAVE, INEVITABLY, PRODUCED INCONSISTENCIES AS
BETWEEN INSURED HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, SOCIAL
SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, AND SO FORTH. MOTIVATED BY A
PRIMACY OF CONCERN FOR CHILDREN, MANY EFFORTS HAVE BEEN
MADE TO COPE WITH INTERRELATED SERVICES. SPONTANEOUS
VOLUNTARY EFFORTS AT CO-ORDINATION HAVE DEVELOPED IN A
NUMBER OF COMMUNITIES.

AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL, THE CABINET COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONED THE STUDY OF RESIDENTIAL SERVICES, AND AS WELL CREATED THE INTERMINISTERIAL COUNCIL FOR TROUBLED CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY POSSIBLE AVENUES OF REFORM, AND PRODUCE IMPROVED CO-ORDINATING STRUCTURES.

MR. SPEAKER, THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOW CONCLUDED THAT IT IS APPROPRIATE AND NECESSARY TO MAKE TWO FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES. AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL, A NEW DIVISION OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES WILL BE ESTABLISHED TO PROVIDE FOR THE TOTAL SPECTRUM OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, EXCEPTING ONLY SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL, CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEES WILL BE ESTABLISHED UNDER REGIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

THE NEW DIVISION IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES WILL HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR:

- (A) OVERALL POLICY DEVELOPMENT,
- (B) THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNIFIED STANDARDS AND LICENSING,
- (C) FINANCING,
- (D) THOSE SERVICES WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO BE PROVIDED DIRECTLY, AND,
- (E) PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION.

AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL, THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEES WILL BE RESPONSIBLE AND HAVE AUTHORITY AND RESOURCES FOR:

- (A) DETERMINING THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND TAKING THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENSURING APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT SERVICES.
- (B) ENSURING THAT APPROPRIATE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED: THE COMMITTEE WOULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO DELIVER SERVICES DIRECTLY, BUT RATHER WOULD ACQUIRE THEM FROM SUITABLE AGENCIES; WHERE SERVICES ARE NOT AVAILABLE LOCALLY, SERVICES COULD BE ACQUIRED ELSEWHERE.
- (C) MONITORING AND EVALUATION.
- (D) ENSURING OR EXERCISING WARDSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CHILDREN PLACED IN CARE UNDER THE CHILD WELFARE ACT, THE TRAINING SCHOOLS ACT, THE JUVENILE DELINQUENTS ACT, OR THEIR SUCCESSORS: THE FAMILY COURT WOULD ADJUDICATE UNDER THESE ACTS; THE LOCAL COMMITTEE WOULD TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENSURING THE PROPER CARE AND CUSTODY OF THE CHILD.

(E) THE PLANNING NECESSARY TO MEET
COMMUNITY NEEDS.

IT IS ESSENTIAL TO FOCUS ON THE INDIVIDUAL
CHILD AND HIS FAMILY RATHER THAN ON THE VARIOUS SYSTEMS
AND INSTITUTIONS. WE FEEL COMMUNITIES ARE BEST ABLE TO
DO THIS.

THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO ENSURE THAT A CHILD
IS SUPPORTED IN HIS OR HER OWN HOME WHENEVER POSSIBLE,
AND THAT RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT OUTSIDE THE HOME SHOULD
OCCUR ONLY IF ESSENTIAL, AND THAT THIS SHOULD BE PROVIDED
IN THE CHILD'S OWN COMMUNITY EXCEPT IN THE MOST UNUSUAL
CIRCUMSTANCES. WE LOOK TO WORK WITH COMMUNITIES TO
ENSURE THAT WHATEVER GROUP HOMES ARE REQUIRED ARE
PROVIDED WITHIN THE HOME COMMUNITY OF THE CHILDREN SERVED.

WE LOOK TO SEE ARRANGEMENTS MADE WITH THE
FAMILY COURTS THAT WILL FURTHER SAFEGUARD THE RIGHTS OF
CHILDREN. WE HOPE THAT THE FEDERAL PROPOSALS FOR NEW
LEGISLATION AFFECTING YOUNG OFFENDERS WILL HARMONIZE WITH
OUR REFORMS.

MR. SPEAKER, IT WILL TAKE TIME TO EFFECT THESE CHANGES. MY COLLEAGUE, THE MINISTER OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES, WILL PROVIDE DETAILS IN A MOMENT ON HOW THE POLICY WILL EVOLVE AND HOW WE ARE COMMITTED TO CONSULT WITH THOSE WHO ARE NOW ENGAGED IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER IN THE PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN.

I HAVE SAID IN THIS LEGISLATURE BEFORE, AND I MUST REPEAT THAT PROBABLY WE WILL NEVER HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS. THERE ARE NO MAGIC CURES. DESPITE THE PUBLIC'S EXPECTATIONS WE WILL NOT ACHIEVE SUCCESS WITH ALL OF OUR CHILDREN. BUT WE WILL TRY.

X AND MR. SPEAKER, THIS GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED TO PUT AN END TO THE ISOLATION OF CHILDREN WHO NEED CARE --- TO PUT AN END TO THE MULTIPLE ASSESSMENTS THAT MANY CHILDREN ARE NOW SUBJECTED TO --- AND TO PUT AN END TO THE SOMETIMES SENSELESS MOVEMENT OF CHILDREN FROM ONE SERVICE TO ANOTHER. THE INTEGRATION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES UNDERLINES OUR DETERMINATION TO PROVIDE A COMPASSIONATE, CARING AND EFFECTIVE FLOW OF SERVICES TO CHILDREN WHO NEED OUR HELP.

STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE KEITH NORTON,
MINISTER OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES,
TO THE ONTARIO LEGISLATURE,
ON THE INTEGRATION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES,
APRIL, 1977

IT IS THE COMMITMENT OF THIS GOVERNMENT TO UNIFY THE SEPARATE PROGRAMS INTO AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM THAT IS BETTER DESIGNED TO MEET THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH ACROSS THIS PROVINCE. THE FIRST STEP OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL WILL BE THE INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION THIS SESSION TO EFFECT THE TRANSFER OF THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS TO THIS NEW DIVISION:

FROM THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BRANCH OF THE MINISTRY, FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS OPERATED UNDER THE CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH CENTRES ACT, REGIONAL CHILDREN'S CENTRES, SPECIAL UNITS FOR CHILDREN IN PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS, AND THE FAMILY COURT CLINICS.

FROM THE MINISTRY OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

THE JUVENILE DIVISION OF THE MINISTRY, ITS TRAINING SCHOOLS, GROUP HOMES, FOSTER HOMES, SPECIAL RATES HOMES, PROBATION AND AFTER CARE SERVICES.

FROM THE MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

OBSERVATION AND DETENTION CENTRES, CONTRACT HOMES.

FROM THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

THE CHILD WELFARE BRANCH OF THE MINISTRY AND FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS OPERATED UNDER THE CHILD WELFARE ACT (INCLUDING CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES), THE CHILDREN'S INSTITUTIONS ACT, THE CHILDREN'S BOARDING HOMES ACT, AND THE CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS ACT (FOR CHILDREN).

THE CHILD ABUSE PROGRAM OF THE MINISTRY.

MENTAL RETARDATION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN.

THE DAY NURSERIES BRANCH OF THE MINISTRY, FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS OPERATED UNDER THE DAY NURSERIES ACT.

THE NEW REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS WILL TAKE EFFECT ON JULY 1, 1977 BUT OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS THERE WILL BE CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION ON THE SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY. IN SOME PROGRAMS, SUCH AS PSYCHIATRIC, MENTAL RETARDATION AND DAY CARE, ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES WILL TAKE A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME TO IMPLEMENT IN ORDER THAT THE TRANSFER BE ACCOMPLISHED AS SMOOTHLY AS POSSIBLE. OTHER PROGRAMS, NOT IDENTIFIED AS YET, MAY ALSO BE INCLUDED IN THE NEW CHILDREN'S SERVICES AREA.

IN ADDITION TO THE ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFER, I INTEND TO MOVE TOWARD OMNIBUS CHILDREN'S LEGISLATION THAT WILL RATIONALIZE AND REFORM SUCH MATTERS AS LICENSING REQUIREMENTS, OPERATING STANDARDS AND FUNDING.

TO IMPLEMENT THESE CHANGES AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL, I AM ANNOUNCING THE APPOINTMENT, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, OF JUDGE GEORGE THOMSON, JUDGE OF THE PROVINCIAL COURT (FAMILY DIVISION) OF KINGSTON, TO THE POSITION OF ASSOCIATE DEPUTY MINISTER, REPORTING DIRECTLY TO ME. THROUGHOUT ONTARIO, AND IN FACT CANADA, JUDGE THOMSON HAS INITIATED TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR THE BENCH TO HELP JUDGES IN THE AREA OF JUVENILES. THROUGH LEADERSHIP IN NUMEROUS LOCAL, PROVINCIAL AND CANADA-WIDE COMMITTEES AND BOARDS AND EXTENSIVE WRITTEN PUBLICATIONS, JUDGE THOMSON HAS ESTABLISHED A HIGH REPUTATION IN THE AREA OF FAMILY LAW. HE HAS THE DIRECT PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, EMPATHY AND COMMITMENT NECESSARY TO SPEARHEAD THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OVERALL GOALS OF AN INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SERVICES SYSTEM.

TO ASSIST JUDGE THOMSON, PETER BARNES, DIRECTOR OF ORGANIZATION, POLICY BRANCH OF MANAGEMENT BOARD, IS NAMED AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NEW DIVISION. MR. BARNES HAS SEVERAL YEARS EXPERIENCE BOTH WITHIN THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT AND AS A CONSULTANT TO MANY LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, BOTH IN CANADA AND EUROPE, SPECIALIZING IN ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS. THE INTEGRATION OF THE CHILDREN'S PROGRAM BOTH AT THE PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL LEVEL, WILL REQUIRE THE SPECIAL SKILLS AND SENSITIVITY MR. BARNES HAS.

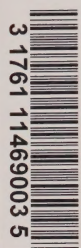
SIMILARLY, AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, WE WILL BE MOVING QUICKLY TO IMPLEMENT A POLICY IN WHICH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO THEIR OWN CHILDREN. IN CONSULTATION WITH REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS, WE WILL START THE IMPLEMENTATION AT THIS LEVEL WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEES. WE WILL BE DEVELOPING, WITH THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS, APPROPRIATE METHODS OF COST-SHARING FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES. IN SO DOING WE WILL ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED FEDERAL YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT AND SOCIAL SERVICES ACT.

FOR THOSE MUNICIPALITIES NOT UNDER REGIONAL GOVERNMENT, THE PROVINCE WILL BE INITIATING, PILOT PROJECTS TO BEGIN TO PHASE IN A UNIFIED APPROACH TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES. THE PILOT PROJECTS WOULD DEMONSTRATE VARIOUS WAYS TO PROVIDE FOR A CONSOLIDATED APPROACH BEST SUITED TO THAT COMMUNITY.

IN ORDER TO PROVIDE AMPLE OPPORTUNITY FOR CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND AGENCIES, AND YET MOVE AS SWIFTLY AS POSSIBLE TO THE CONSOLIDATION OF SERVICES, I WILL BE ANNOUNCING BY JULY 1, A FULL TIMETABLE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONSOLIDATION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES WILL TAKE THE COOPERATION OF LITERALLY THOUSANDS OF GOVERNMENT STAFF AND MANY MORE THOUSANDS OF STAFF FROM AGENCIES, RESIDENCES AND SERVICES. IF WE ARE TO REACH OUR GOAL OF AN INTEGRATED DELIVERY SYSTEM THAT TRULY MEETS THE NEEDS OF EACH CHILD, THERE WILL NEED TO BE A HIGH PRIORITY PLACED ON CONSULTATION. TO THIS END I HAVE ALREADY WRITTEN TO THE HEADS OF PROVINCIAL STAFF, AGENCIES AND RESIDENCES IDENTIFIED TO DATE, TO OUTLINE THE PROPOSED CHANGES AND SOLICIT THEIR ASSISTANCE.

OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, I WILL BE HOLDING MEETINGS WITH THESE SENIOR STAFF AND WITH KEY AGENCIES TO INFORM THEM OF PROGRESS AND TO ASK THEIR COMMENTS AND CONCERNS. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THESE PEOPLE, AS WELL AS THE MEMBERS OF THIS LEGISLATURE, SHARE MY CONCERN IN PROVIDING THE BEST POSSIBLE SPECIAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH AND TOGETHER OVER THE COMING YEARS WE CAN GO FURTHER TOWARDS OUR COMMON GOAL.



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